

Preventing Violent Extremism Forum

At the Crossroads of Theory and Practice

A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Presented By



**COUNTER
EXTREMISM
PROJECT**

New York City | October 17, 2018

PRESENTERS



THE 'MPOWER PROJECT

**COUNTER
EXTREMISM
PROJECT**



Permanent Mission of the Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations



Permanent Mission of Norway
to the United Nations



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Forum was a full day forum co-presented by The 'MPOWER Project and Counter Extremism Project on October 17, 2018 at Scandinavia House, New York City. The Forum was co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Norway and Jordan. The Forum brought together a group of experts, practitioners, and policymakers in an event designed to discuss the major challenges in PVE today, as well as to brainstorm possible solutions to those challenges. It was attended by an international academic, practitioner, and policy-making public sector audience as well as representatives from the intelligence, marketing/advertising, and technology arenas in the private sector. The Forum included many interactive sessions in which participants could interact with and learn from one another. A wide variety of issues were discussed, including why a preventative approach is critical in today's landscape, what the best practices for preventing violent extremism are, and how various aspects of someone's identity can contribute to their likelihood of attaching to violent ideologies. The following report presents an analysis of the Forum, including key insights, action items and policy recommendations.

LETTER FROM THE FORUM ORGANIZERS

In the era of Internet today, preventing violent extremism of all varieties must be approached as both art and science. Technology, data science, and cognitive security must be used in lock-step with hard security and tactical measures, all while keeping citizens' rights central.

In a world that often seems ridden with violence, it is not enough to focus on security measures, traditional weapons, and tactical operations. We need to inoculate against radical ideology before it even takes root, and subvert violence before it even becomes a conscious option. The 'MPOWER Project's team brings together more than 50 years of combined experience in conflict resolution, security policy analysis, military and intelligence operations, marketing, journalism, strategic communications, and academic research. This combined experience has enabled us to develop an approach to "out-brand" violent extremism that puts the human element first and is about prevention at its core.

We believe that it is critical to consider these highly complex issues through a different lens: a human-centric approach, enfusing state of mind psychographics and personal identity indicators. The 'MPOWER Project was developed to push the limitations of traditional measures and carve out a space for new private-public partnerships and innovative application of tried and true disciplines like marketing and psychology. Inoculation is at the heart of prevention. As an organization, we believe that words and ideas can be more compelling than violence. We seek to create doubt, introduce ambiguity, and support identity empowerment.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote balanced approach to countering violent extremism and recruitment to all varieties
Encourage greater understanding of the delineation of PVE from CVE—specifically, the importance of a preventative approach
- Emphasize the role personal identity plays in attachment to destructive ideology
- Carve out a niche “space” for prevention-focused approach and programming
- Define how prevention can be implemented from intel to law enforcement to development programming
- Establish programming design, monitoring and evaluation best practices for PVE
- Foster cross-sector dialogue, partnership development and networking—bring all points of view and stakeholders to the table to centralize preventative approach

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is PVE/How does it differ from traditional CVE efforts?
- Why is PVE important?
- How do Development and Counterterrorism intersect with PVE?
- How is new technology inherently important to PVE?
- What are examples of programming that should be differentiated as PVE as opposed to CVE? Why? And how should these differentiations be made?
- How do you monitor and evaluate based on the negative action?
- What are best practices in terms of PVE programming?
- How do the conflicting aspects of someone’s personal identity contribute to ideological attachment?

PARTICIPANTS & FORMAT

One of the core goals was to bring a range of cross-sector, multi-disciplinary voices to the table to promote a more inclusive, nuanced, and comprehensive understanding of the issues at play. At the event, we were pleased to host over 100 different organizations. We were delighted to welcome attendees from 15 countries and representation from government, various NGOs, marketing, academia, law enforcement, military, journalism, data science, and technology. The Forum was a wonderful meeting of minds.

To accomplish its goals, the Forum included a combination of keynotes, panels, breakout sessions, and a short film. The main keynote was in lecture format. The two panels were formatted as a discussion between the moderator and the five panel participants, each of whom was an expert in their respective field. Each panel fielded questions from the audience after the panel discussion. The short film was a videotaped conversation between an expert researcher on radicalization and a former member of a violent extremist movement. The four breakout sessions were interactive experiences in which two expert moderators led a discussion that aimed to include all of the participants in the session.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



Featured Speakers

Ambassador Hattrem (Permanent Mission of Norway)

Ambassador Bahous (Permanent Mission of Jordan)

Overview

Ambassador Hattrem's remarks addressed how to prevent violent extremism and its role at the nexus of law enforcement tactics and development. Ambassador Bahous' speech focused on how to attain a better understanding of the root causes of violent extremism.

Key Questions and Themes

- How can we prevent violent extremism? What are some challenges inherent in the arena?
- What dilemmas are faced at the crossroads between theory and practice?
- What roles do technology and media play in violent extremism?

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Insights and Action Items

- Violent extremism transcends national and religious borders
- Contemporary extremist organizations have developed inspirational and compelling narratives through sophisticated media, technology, and propaganda
- Open and frank discussions between policy-makers, civil society, the private sector, researchers, and governments are an important first step—even if they don't immediately lead to concrete recommendations

Quotable Moments

“The members of the UN have agreed on a global counterterrorism strategy that specifically mentions the importance of prevention.”—Ambassador Hattrem

“We hope that this forum will help us better align our international efforts and responses to preventing violent extremism, because no country is immune, and no religion is immune.”—Ambassador Bahous

“It is widely agreed that violent extremism and terrorism are not linked to any background, nationality, religion, or belief.”

—Ambassador Hattrem

OPENING REMARKS



Featured Speaker

Christy Grace Provines (The 'MPOWER Project)

Overview

Provines introduced her organization and its unique approach to outbranding social and digital recruitment to violent extremism. She discussed how emerging technologies and big data have changed the way vulnerable individuals are recruited, and how those same tools might be applied in undermining and eradicating extremist ideologies. Her remarks emphasized the importance of adopting a more human-centric, preventative approach to understanding violent extremism

OPENING REMARKS

Key Questions and Themes

- How can we create a more human-centric, preventative approach to understanding violent extremism?
- How can today's marketing strategies be applied to counter the social and digital recruitment of vulnerable individuals?
- How can we create connection, plant seeds of doubt, and introduce ambiguity to those suffering from identity vulnerability?

Insights and Action Items

- The internet and in particular, social media technology and content, played an important role in driving, inciting and organising violent extremism
- The 'MPOWER Project aims to present target audiences with the most relevant and impactful message possible by understanding the motivations, influencers, challenges and personal value system of each audience
- Research conducted by The 'MPOWER Project identified that Identity Vulnerability, a cognitive and emotional state of mind, serves as the baseline through which motivators to violence of all forms (to self and to others) should be considered
- Cross-sector and multi-disciplinary partnership is central to promote an inclusive, nuanced and comprehensive understanding of violent extremism, as well as develop innovative and effective approaches to address the issue

Quotable Moments

“Similar to the way global brands have done from the halls of Madison Avenue, groups promoting recruitment to violent extremist ideologies have become sophisticated digital marketers, adept at building brand value, engaging their audiences and inciting action.”—Christy Grace Provines

“Undermining and, ultimately, eradicating extremist ideology online remains a foremost challenge as new ideologies take root and seek to exploit both the security weakness of technology and media platforms as well as the human insecurities created and exacerbated by social media and a more diffusely connected society at large.”
—Christy Grace Provines

“Identity vulnerability, a cognitive and emotional state of mind that occurs prior to awareness and attachment to a destructive ideology, allows an individual to become more easily manipulated. Attachment to a new narrative in this state of mind can change an individual's perception, personal qualities, beliefs and social ties.”
—Christy Grace Provines

“Our framework is built around a human-centric approach that seeks to inoculate against radical ideology before it even takes root, in an effort to subvert violence before it is even a conscious option. This is a time when someone is seeking connection with something and when messaging can be most influential in shaping their path forward.”
—Christy Grace Provines

KEYNOTE



Featured Speaker

Hans Jakob Schindler (Counter Extremism Project)

Overview

Schindler's remarks examined the modern counter-terrorism landscape and how it is affected by various terrorist networks. Schindler also discussed several examples of terrorist groups, how they can work together, and the strategies they use to draw people to their cause.

KEYNOTE

Key Questions and Themes

- What is the current counter-terrorism landscape?
- How do terrorist networks affect the counter-terrorism landscape? How do the networks interact with one another?
- What is the ISIL brand built on? What is its network structure?

Insights and Action Items

- Changes in territoriality, foreign terrorist fighter recruitment, and the organization of affiliates forced ISIL to adapt and transform from a hierarchical territory-based organization to a globally distributed network of cells and individuals
- Because ISIL lost almost all its territory, it had to switch to online recruitment and radicalization of individuals and sympathizers
- ISIL specifically asked individuals not to travel to conflict zones, but rather to conduct attacks in their home country
- Foreign fighter returnees may also be a cause for concern; individuals who return to their home countries after terrorist training have the potential to do serious harm

Quotable Moments

“It seems necessary to analyze not only the appeal of one particular strand of extremist ideology, but also to focus on what makes extremist ideologies and worldviews in general attractive to individuals.”—Hans Jakob Schindler

“It seems necessary to analyze not only the appeal of one particular strand of extremist ideology, but also to focus on what makes extremist ideologies and worldviews in general attractive to individuals.”

—Hans Jakob Schindler

PANEL 1

A HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH TO PREVENTING RADICALIZATION



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Moderator: Ambassador Marc Ginsberg

Panelists: Mia Bloom (Georgia State University), Mitch Silber (Former NYPD), JM Berger (Author, *Extremism*), Ian Acheson (Sampson Hall), Hassan Hassan (George Washington University, Program on Extremism)

Overview

This panel discussed the reasons individuals may be drawn to violent extremism, emphasized the necessity of a preventative approach, and outlined best practices for a human-centric approach to PVE.

PANEL 1

A HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH TO PREVENTING RADICALIZATION

Key Questions and Themes

- How can we identify prospective extremists? What gets individuals started on the trajectory to extremism?
- What allows extremist ideologies to resonate? What are the incentives for violence?
- How can we get inside the mind of a prospective extremist before that extremist begins to take action?

Insights and Action Items

- ISIL communications are often positive—they do not only promote pictures of beheadings, but also show all the good things they do
- These positive messages from ISIL resonate with the audience
- Positive incentives are necessary for promoting individuals to do something for their communities (instead of turning to violent extremism)
- Prevention is critical—by the time someone has begun thinking of joining a terrorist organization, it is most likely too late to reach that person
- Demographic profiling of prospective extremists is not enough
- Extremist ideologies fulfill specific needs, such as individuals' need for certainty; when people experience personal or social uncertainty, they are more susceptible to extremist messages
- If you take away radical ideology from people's lives, you have to replace it with something else

Quotable Moments

“Most Palestinians who participate in militant activities are not doing it because they like the prospect of dying. They do it because they think this is the way they can help their communities.”—Mia Bloom

“I don't think changing hearts and minds should ever really be the goal. That sets the bar way too high. I think what we can do is change behaviors.”—Mia Bloom

“Once someone starts thinking about joining a terrorist organization, it's almost too late to reverse it, because they get into a new worldview that is so galvanizing... Whatever you say to them, they become resistant to it. They already see the world in a different way.”—Hassan Hassan

“We must separate religiosity from violent extremism.”—Ian Acheson

“Extremism is not just a jihadist problem: it can be neo-Nazis, it can be Tamil Tigers, anyone.”—JM Berger

PANEL 2

PREVENTING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Moderator: Laith Alkhouri (Flashpoint)

Panelists: Graeme Wood (The Atlantic), Joshua Fisher-Birch (Counter Extremism Project), Kendra Clarke (Sparks & Honey), Don Codling (Former FBI Unit Chief, Cyber Crimes Division)

Overview

This panel focused on the online ecosystem, addressing both how it has evolved over time as a tool for communication by violent extremists and how to prevent violent extremism in the present and future digital age.

PANEL 2

PREVENTING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Key Questions and Themes

- Are we seeing less violent extremist propaganda on surface web platforms because companies are doing better with limiting/removing content, or are violent extremists actually producing less?
- Are violent extremists bridging the gap with expert cyber criminals in financial cyber terrorism? Is this a tactic used for advancing and fine-tuning future agendas?
- Should we use data from the deep dark web for the purpose of understanding the process of radicalization the same as we would from the surface web?
- What has made recruitment to violent extremism effective despite engagement being primarily conducted within cyber space rather than face-to-face?
- How do we see the community playing a role in preventing violent extremism both offline and online?

Insights and Action Items

- It would be false to believe violent extremists are producing less propaganda. Instead, they are better adapting to the limitations on their recruitment strategies and tactics on the surface web, as well as employing more radicalization propaganda elsewhere
- The removal of content is a dual-edged sword when juxtaposed with understanding the radicalization process. As a result of content being removed, data collection for the purpose of understanding radicalization and developing violent extremist profiles has been difficult
- Communication used to recruit and radicalize individuals has become increasingly difficult to decipher. As a result, pinpointing recruitment communication has often come down to recognizing the patterns of loaded language being used
- Data isn't indexed in the same way on the deep dark web as it is on the surface web; therefore, often requiring custom building of code to extract that data. This process is becoming easier and more streamlined over time
- Communities need to take on a larger role in preventative programs (as opposed to the government) to deter radicalization to violent extremism

Quotable Moments

“The professionalism, the capabilities, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of criminal organizations to come up with tools are astonishing; they are as good, if not better than nation states, and many of the individuals that are utilizing these platforms purposely base themselves in nation states where the rule of law is weak, and where there isn't the technological capability to discover they're even there by the local constabulary.”—Don Codling

A SHORT FILM CONVERSATION

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Christian Picciolini (Founder, Free Radicals Project)

Arie Kruglanski (Distinguished Professor of Psychology, University of Maryland)

Overview

Lunch at the Forum featured an exclusive screening of a short film produced by The 'MPOWER Project, featuring former skinhead leader Christian Picciolini talking to Arie Kruglanski, a Distinguished University of Maryland Professor and 'MPOWER Project Advisor. The film set up a candid, nuanced conversation that bridged the gap between theory and practice and discussed radicalization through a more human-centric lens.

Key Questions and Themes

- How can a human-centric approach help us understand radicalization through real-life personal stories as told by former extremists?
- What is the role of personal identity and quest for personal significance in allowing someone to be open to radical ideology?
- What is the role of messaging in influencing perception, state of mind, and behavior? What is the role of messaging in recruitment?
- Using a psychology-based approach, how should practitioners set up prevention in combating radicalization and mobilization to violence?

A SHORT FILM CONVERSATION

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Insights and Action Items

- It is important to focus on individuals' cognitive state of mind (and not just their attachment to a specific ideology) when examining their motivations for joining and remaining in extremist groups
- Individuals who feel marginalized, and who are searching for purpose and meaning, are Identity Vulnerable—in other words, they are more open to being recruited into an extremist ideology
- In order to draw individuals away from violent extremism, you have to provide them with a compelling alternative narrative
- Providing education, as well as eliminating and reducing inequality, is critical to reducing violent extremism
- According to Kruglanski, there are three N's of radicalization: Need, Narrative, and Network

Need: Humans act based on their psychological needs. All humans have a basic need for significance, mattering, and respect; the way they choose to fulfill this need can vary depending on the ideology they subscribe to. Extremist narratives promise individuals that their need for significance will be fulfilled—that they will be important and valued. This is what makes those narratives so alluring

Narrative: The extremist narrative gives individuals permission to use violence to achieve their need for respect and significance

Network: Violence is shunned by mainstream society, so there has to be a local network that supports an individual's view and validates the cause. Such a network can be found in extremist groups

Quotable Moments

"A man recognized that I was vulnerable, that I was on the margins—and he came and he promised me paradise. He promised that I would go from powerless to powerful. That I would go from alone, to being part of a family. And that my purpose would be to change the world."—Christian Picciolini

"It's interesting, because the reason I was drawn to the movement was because I felt marginalized from society. By joining the movement, I marginalized myself even further from society without even recognizing it."—Christian Picciolini

"Hurt people hurt people."—Christian Picciolini

"To take somebody out of a movement, I believe you have to replace that identity, community, and purpose that they have there with something else."—Christian Picciolini

"Extremism is not about ideology. It's about the human being, and we need to fix the human being."—Christian Picciolini

BREAKOUT 1

MESSAGING/ONLINE RECRUITMENT



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Keynote Moderators: Laith Alkhouri (Flashpoint), Hans Jakob Schindler (Counter Extremism Project)

Expert Moderators: Ryan Wick (The 'MPOWER Project), Christy Grace Provines (The 'MPOWER Project)

Overview

This session focused on the role of messaging and content development with the goal of countering recruitment narratives. Conversation centered around analysis of case studies, development of best practices, and robust discussion on necessary shifts in information consumption for combating online recruitment. The central theme of this discussion revolved around the use of marketing, digital media and creative engagement strategies to “out-brand” recruitment entities like ISIL and the Alt-Right.

BREAKOUT 1

MESSAGING/ONLINE RECRUITMENT

Key Questions and Themes

- What is the role of social media and emerging tech platforms in recruitment to destructive ideology?
- Which content strategies and messaging tactics that are most effective?
- What is being done? What worked? What did not? Why? Key Challenges?
- What is the acceptable legal boundary protecting basic rights and freedoms in terms of messaging and online recruitment and responsibility of government and technology platforms in keeping citizens safe?

Insights and Action Items

- The Messenger Matters: Government lacks authenticity and credibility in counter and alternative narrative development in the context of radicalization. Trusted Influencers acknowledged by the audience should be used to communicate the message—this will increase engagement, perception of authenticity and will generally resonate more
- Content Matters: Public Service Announcement (PSA) ads don't engage, inspire and create virtual community the way storytelling does
- Audience Matters: Messaging must be targeted and must tap into the psychological state of mind of the audience—What are key challenges? What are they motivated by? How do they process and consume information? Who are they most influenced by?
- When and Where the Message is Delivered Matters. Case studies show that a preventative approach is optimum to having the highest amount of influence. Messaging should be presented and received when the audience is in the curious, inquiring phase, prior to attachment to any particular narrative
- The Alternative Narrative Matters: counter messaging that mocks terrorist narratives have often been criticized as inflammatory and an instigator of violence. The strategic message, taking a preventative approach, should present an alternative path forward and or solution rather than a direct counter to the recruitment message. The goal is to inoculate against violence even being a viable option, to encourage resilience and community

**“Hatred is born of ignorance.
Fear is its father and
isolation is its mother.”**

—Christian Picciolini

BREAKOUT 2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Keynote Moderator: Randy Blazak

Expert Moderator: David Daoud (Counter Extremism Project)

Overview

This session addressed the essential question of how communities and government entities can engage with one another in order to create thriving communities built on trust, as well as promote positive social interaction and support. Additionally, it focused on the shift to preventative strategies, as opposed to ones that are counteractive, in order to create new positive and supportive narratives for individuals to gravitate toward.

BREAKOUT 2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS

Key Questions and Themes

- What is the role of law enforcement in cultivating safe, resilient, and inclusive community development?
- How can we create common ground between law enforcement and community, and encourage collaboration?
- What is being done? What worked? What did not? Why? What are some challenges?
- What is the balance of safety and privacy in terms of community development?

Insights and Action Items

- Programs that have focused on countering destructive ideologies have not been successful; as a result, more communities and government entities are now utilizing a preventative approach
- Hezbollah provides us with a good example of community engagement: Hezbollah has been able to engage with the community on levels where the government has failed. They provided schools, hospitals, food, charity work, and a sense of empowerment to disempowered citizens. When the government fails to fill these essential roles, it leaves behind a void that can then be filled by destructive ideologies, or by an entity/organization that carries with it a destructive narrative
- One of the challenges is for the government and law enforcement to earn back the trust of their communities; the ability to engage with the community and assist with its development without being overly-intrusive is crucial
- Governments and law enforcement should be able to provide assistance for individuals seeking an alternate narrative while also maintaining their privacy

“Extremist movements tend to pop up when there’s a perfect storm of uncertainty and grievance, whether real or perceived.”

—Christian Picciolini

BREAKOUT 3

EARLY DETECTION AND PREVENTION (FAMILY, FRIENDS, EDUCATION)



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Keynote Moderator: Ian Acheson (Sampson Hall)

Expert Moderator: Shannon Martinez (Free Radicals Project)

Overview

This session raised important questions on the role of family, friends, coaches and teachers in preventing violent extremism and detecting early indicators of Identity Vulnerability and recruitment to violence-based ideology. In addition, the ethics and potential efficacy of a more proactive approach formalized through education policy and the education system such as programming and anti-recruitment messaging and in-class exposure was debated robustly.

BREAKOUT 3

EARLY DETECTION AND PREVENTION (FAMILY, FRIENDS, EDUCATION)



Key Questions and Themes

- What is the role of family, friends and school administration in detecting early indicators and warning behavior?
- How can we promote awareness building and education of family, friends and teachers?
- What are the best practices in educating students and siblings on resisting recruitment tactics and strategies?
- What is being done? What worked? What did not? Why? What are some challenges?
- How do we approach young people without encroaching on individual identity or losing trust while avoiding stigmatization?

BREAKOUT 4

CONTENT TAKEDOWN/REGULATION AND INTERVENTION



Featured Speakers and Moderators

Keynote Moderator: Ambassador Marc Ginsberg

Expert Moderator: Don Codling (Former FBI Unit Chief, Cybercrimes Division)

Overview

This session focused on the tension between law enforcement's need to collect intelligence on extremist movements and the need to take down online extremist content. It also touched on how to best allow freedom of speech while preventing individuals from freely posting extremist propaganda online.

BREAKOUT 4

CONTENT TAKEDOWN/REGULATION AND INTERVENTION

Key Questions and Themes

- How can we balance human rights and online security?
- What can we do to stop the proliferation of content without relinquishing the value of intel?
- How do we use data ethically? How do we establish best practices and societal norms while keeping in mind a human rights approach to data usage?
- What is being done? What worked? What did not? Why? What are some challenges?

Insights and Action Items

- It is very difficult to find an ideal balance between allowing freedom of speech and preventing the proliferation of extremist content online; law enforcement continually grapples with this challenge
- Extremists and criminals have gotten much savvier at hiding their content over the past few years; they now use the deep dark web and other channels (e.g., Telegram)
- It is important to look at what Europeans are doing and how they are dealing with these issues: for instance, Germany is doing a good job of legislating against posting extremist content on the web, and the US can learn from that

“I don’t think changing hearts and minds should ever really be the goal. That sets the bar way too high. I think what we can do is change behaviors.”

—Mia Bloom

CONCLUSIONS

The Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Forum brought together a group of cross-sector experts, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss the most effective ways to counter the proliferation of extremist ideology today.

The PVE Forum's panels and sessions addressed a variety of topics, including the roots of violent extremism, the best way to employ a human-centric approach to preventing violent extremism, and how to translate these notions into realistic and actionable policy objectives.

Many of the participants in the PVE Forum agreed that when vulnerable individuals are searching for something that can empower them, it is critical for governments, communities, and/or organizations to create positive, non-violent alternative narratives that those individuals can turn to.

ABOUT THE REPORT

The authors of this report are Christy Grace Provines (Founder/President–The 'MPOWER Project), Rachael Firestone (Research Director–The 'MPOWER Project & PhD Candidate–Vanderbilt University), Marina Chernikova (Research and Strategy Director–The 'MPOWER Project & Postdoctoral Researcher–University of Maryland), Michael Tashji (Brand Director–The 'MPOWER Project), and Jesse Mathieu (Research Associate–The 'MPOWER Project).

This report develops The 'MPOWER Project's audience theory of Identity Vulnerability. It is grounded in the Theory of Personal Significance, which was developed by Arie Kruglanski, a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland. The research was supported by the Counter Extremism Project. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the University of Maryland or Counter Extremism Project.

“Even though [terrorists] seem to be extremely different from each other on the surface—they believe in different things, they want different things superficially—at the end of the day, the core psychological dynamic is the same.”

—Arie Kruglanski

ABOUT THE 'MPOWER PROJECT



The 'MPOWER Project is a not-for-profit, non-partisan NGO that is a hybrid creative/strategic communications agency and think tank with the goal of “out-branding” social and digital recruitment to violent ideology using research-backed brand marketing tactics. The 'MPOWER Project advocates for preventative, human-centric approaches to countering violent extremism and has developed an original audience theory—Identity Vulnerability—which considers radicalization through nuanced understanding of an at-risk individual’s state of mind. The 'MPOWER Project was founded in 2017 by Christy Grace Provines, a graduate of Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs and a 15-year Brand Marketing veteran in NYC. The 'MPOWER Project’s Advisory Board consists of distinguished leaders in government, academia, marketing, and intelligence.

ABOUT THE COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT

The Counter Extremism Project (CEP) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, international policy organization formed to combat the growing threat from extremist ideologies. Led by a renowned group of former world leaders and diplomats it combats extremism by pressuring financial and material support networks; countering the narrative of extremists and their online recruitment; and advocating for smart laws, policies, and regulations.

Extremists are spreading their ideology and recruiting support across the globe, posing a complex and urgent challenge that cannot be addressed by government alone. There is a responsibility for private groups and individuals to organize in opposition to extremists. To this end, CEP is:

- Assembling an extensive research and analysis database on extremist groups and their networks of support, providing an indispensable resource to governments, the media, NGOs and civil society organizations, and the general public;
- Exposing channels of financial and material support to extremist groups;
- Using the latest communications, social media, and technological tools to identify and reveal the extremist threat and directly counter extremist ideology and recruitment online; and
- Assisting policymakers around the world to devise legislation and regulations that effectively combat extremism.

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Branding Director

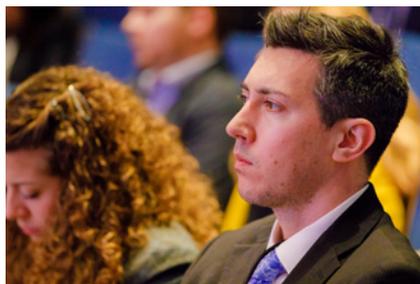
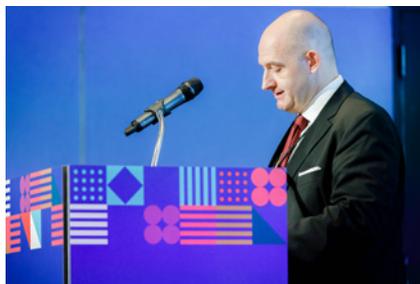
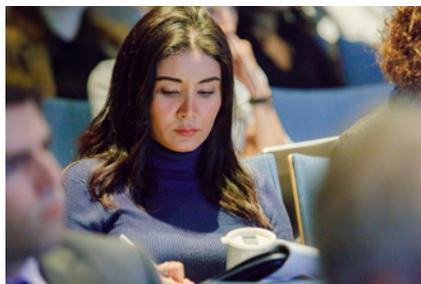
Christy Grace Provines

Creative Strategist and
Strategic Communications

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